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REVIEW ARTICLE

Insights into Communication Efficiency: Quality of Information and Traveler Satisfaction as Key Drivers in Examining Customer Experience

Iris Mihajlović *

University of Dubrovnik, Faculty of Economics and Business, Dubrovnik, Croatia
iris.mihajlovic@unidu.hr https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2991-176X

Anamaria Lukenda

Atlassian Corporation, Center of Excellence, Mountain View, CA, United States

Andrea Ucović

University of Dubrovnik, Faculty of Economics and Business, Dubrovnik, Croatia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *The paper examines customer experience management in tourism, with an emphasis on travel as a specific form of consumer experiences. The quality of the customer experience becomes a key differentiating factor when choosing destinations and service providers, with information and digital technologies playing a crucial role.* ***Design/Methodology:*** *The paper combines theoretical and practical insights to demonstrate how the understanding of customer experiences in tourism and its components contribute to the systematic approach when finding optimal models for experience management and achieving the satisfaction. The theoretical part considers sources of information before, during, and after travel and it presents customer experience management models, such as the FICO and Forrester models. The empirical part is based on a survey whose aim is to examine ways of informing travelers about travel, the importance of different sources and formats of information, and the relationship between the level of preparedness and information and the level of experience measured by the level of customer satisfaction.* ***Findings:*** *Findings highlight key factors in travel decision-making, such as reliability, accuracy, availability and security of information, which encourage loyalty and strengthen the perception of destination identity. By reducing the gap between expectations and an actual value, through the quality of information and the application of innovative technological solutions, spatial and temporal convergence is enabled, better adaptation of the offer to the needs of travelers and finally harmonization of relations between service providers and users in distant markets.* ***Practical Implications:*** *Digital tools, such as reviews and online platforms, enable efficient co-creation of services, covering emotional and sensory components of the experience, and improving the customer experience quality.* ***Originality/Value:*** *The paper provides insights into how quality customer experience in tourism, supported by innovative digital tools and information sources, contributes to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, and offers a framework for improving relations between providers and users in a global tourism market.*

Keywords: tourism, user experience, personalized information, recommendations, digital tools

JEL codes: L83, M31, Z33

* Corresponding author: Iris Mihajlović

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1. Introduction

Tourism faces the challenge of balancing value preservation and transformation, where personalized interpretation of values shapes the customer experience (CX) and serves as a key differentiator in decision-making. While price reflects economic feasibility, time and quality of information are decisive factors in travel choices, highlighting the importance of effective communication in creating, delivering, and sharing value. Tourism's labor-intensive, immediate, and inseparable services widen the gap between supply and demand, making high-quality, shareable information a crucial mediator. Motivated travelers with access to smart tourism technologies engage in both exploratory and practical behaviors (Tao et al., 2022).

CX encompasses all traveler interactions with destinations and service providers—from research and booking to travel and post-trip evaluation. It integrates emotional, social, and digital dimensions beyond service quality, requiring interdisciplinary management combining marketing, technology, and psychology (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Rawson, Duncan & Jones 2013). Mismatches between expectations and experiences can reduce satisfaction, especially in digital contexts where reputation is fragile and online reviews heavily influence future decisions (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008; Nasir, 2017).

Ultimately, the quality of service is largely shaped by the interaction between staff and users. Managing CX is not merely operational-it is a strategic orientation for the entire tourism system. Innovations in communication tools complement human interaction, emphasizing employee competence in dynamic, demand-driven environments. Digitalization has reshaped interactive communication, deepening user knowledge and empowering providers in pricing, strategic planning, and collaboration. It has enhanced the exchange of information regarding service quality and availability, optimized participant time, and enabled secondary digital technologies. It is obvious from the rise of the use of the sharing economy and peer-to-peer (P2P) models, grounded in complementarity and trust, confirming the value of recommendations as dominant information sources. Digital tools and algorithms have amplified the availability and sharing of experiences, transforming market dynamics. Word-of-mouth remains a key influence, evolving from personal conversations to digital platforms, while co-creation and participatory production shift control over products, methods, and timing, generating new tourist experiences that connect or separate users and providers in real time (Mulcahy, 2015).

Digital tools and information and communication technologies (ICT) also enable personalized, flexible, and real-time travel experiences (Aničić, Kovačević & Stojanović, 2023; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). Emerging technologies like virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) further transform information delivery and value creation, supporting experience-based and transformational tourism economies (Brand & Rocchi, 2011). Employees remain central as CX ambassadors; their engagement and competence are critical for positive experiences, loyalty, and destination image, while negative experiences can rapidly erode trust and market share (Gallup, 2020). Effective CX management thus integrates human, technological, and organizational factors to create sustainable competitive advantage in tourism

2. Literature review

In shaping travel behavior, influencing expectations, satisfaction, and loyalty, the quality of information is crucial (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Accurate, timely, and reliable information reduces uncertainty, bridges the gap between anticipated and actual experiences, and fosters emotional engagement and word-of-mouth (WOM). Co-creation between tourists and providers further enhances service quality, with key performance indicators including speed, transparency, and personalization.

Information sources in tourism are categorized as traditional, digital, and personal. Traditional sources, brochures, media, and fairs, remain relevant for older travelers and support authentic experiences, while digital sources dominate modern tourism, offering real-time access, price comparison, and reviews through websites, apps, and social media (Poslovni.hr, 2021a; 2021b). Personal sources, such as recommendations and peer reviews, strongly influence perceptions due to authenticity and emotional resonance (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). Expectation management is a continuous process requiring communicative, operational, and analytical approaches: consistent and empathetic narratives, real-time delivery adjustments, and feedback-based learning (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Digital tools shape expectations before, during, and after travel, with smart tourism destinations integrating ICT, leadership, and social capital to personalize information, forecast demand, and guide visitor flows (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2013). During travel, digital tools support micro-decisions, requiring synchronized data, reputation monitoring, and responsive communication. Post-travel, user-generated content serves as a quality signal and influences future travelers (Yachin, 2018). Effective management of information ecosystems aligns expectations with real experiences, enhancing satisfaction, loyalty, and the overall quality of CX (No & Kim, 2015).

CX is a key differentiator, especially in tourism. It is crucial for future development of the destination and the image of service providers. It goes beyond the purchase or use of a service, encompassing all touchpoints - direct and indirect - that shape a customer's perception of a product, service, which model the perception of users considering the visible, and tangible features or more specific (intangible, inseparable) features of services (Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Direct contacts include interactions when purchasing, using a product or communicating with support, while indirect ones include experiences through advertisements, recommendations, reviews or media releases. CX is a broader concept than customer service because it includes product design, usability, emotions and the values conveyed by a brand (Rawson, Duncan & Jones, 2013). Customer satisfaction occurs when expectations are aligned with actual experiences, and measuring satisfaction alone is not enough – all the constituent elements of the experience need to be analyzed in order to identify steps for improvement (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

In many organizations, responsibility for CX management is fragmented across departments: marketing leads the communication, while the development team focuses on technical specifications (Rawson, Duncan, & Jones, 2013). Today's customer's value simple, consistent, and integrated solutions, making clearly structured CX management essential for loyalty.

Effective management requires structured processes, engagement of expert staff, application of technology, and monitoring of CX, making CX a strategic tool for creating value and competitive advantage. Involving customers in the creation of services increases their engagement, while functionality, design, and emotional connection strongly influence loyalty. Five dimensions - feelings, thought processes, behavior, relationships, and sensations - shape the overall experience.

In a digital environment, priorities include website design, information accessibility, and technology that shapes perceptions of service quality. Positive experiences encourage referrals and additional purchases, while negative ones can result in customer churn (Nasir,

2017). CRM systems enable personalization of interactions and alignment of offers with customer expectations, thus increasing loyalty and improving CX, while reducing costs and increasing profitability. Simple tools can sometimes be enough to achieve high quality and customer satisfaction, without the need for sophisticated technology. Market dynamics and competition in the domain of communication channels require maintaining consistency, while digital transformation places CX as a key value and an integrated part of organizational culture (Batroff, 2016). A quality user experience requires the engagement of all business functions: marketing adapts communication, operational processes enable quality delivery, the development team monitors the user experience, IT systems support data collection and analysis, and human resources develop user-oriented employees. Employees in direct contact with users play a special role, while financial teams analyze data and turn it into action plans (Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

CX management requires a systematic approach, in-depth data analysis and understanding of hidden customer needs, along with continuous feedback collection. Clearly defined and coordinated processes make it possible to meet customer expectations, increase loyalty and create a long-term competitive advantage. CX Management Models are key tools for organizations to systematically create and improve CX. Halvorsrud, Kvale and Følstad (2016) develop a framework based on CX maturity levels, divided into the dimensions of strategy, process, organizational culture, technology and metrics. Each dimension is assessed with a structured questionnaire, which enables organizations to determine their current level of maturity – from initial and reactive to integrated, proactive and optimized practices. This model emphasizes the need for coordination between departments, with clearly defined goals, and continuous collection and use of user data, along with organizational learning where feedback is turned into strategic action. In this way, the framework enables not only the assessment of the current state, but also the planning of CX improvements in line with business goals.

One of the most well-known approaches is based on five dimensions: brand vision and values, customer focus, visionary leadership, employee engagement, and tools and processes. A customer-centric vision defines the long-term framework for an organization's operations, based on real values and sustainable opportunities, thereby ensuring brand credibility and quality. Organizational culture focuses on customer needs and expectations, encouraging internal collaboration, feedback sharing, and employee emotional involvement in problem solving. Visionary leadership demonstrates customer focus through regular communication with customers, analyzing feedback, and incorporating CX into strategic decisions, creating a "culture by example" that increases customer loyalty and business results (Gartner, 2020). Satisfied and motivated employees are key components of CX quality. Engagement is manifested through pride, loyalty, and a sense of contribution to the vision. Affecting the freedom to make decisions, companies with high engagement achieve greater productivity and customer loyalty (Gallup, 2020). Effective CX management requires digital tools and processes for collecting and analyzing feedback, system integration, continuous monitoring of customer satisfaction, and the organization's readiness for continuous improvement and personalization of services.

The second is the FICO CX model, which includes eight disciplines: user understanding, strategy, measurement, governance, design, processes, technology, and culture and organization. It defines 51 best practices relevant to improving CX (Batroff, 2016). Each practice is rated on a scale of 0 to 5, allowing organizations to clearly identify how frequently, extensively, and thoroughly they have adopted the practice. A score of 0 (0%) indicates a practice that has not been implemented at all; 1 (1–20%) indicates adoption on a very limited scale or through occasional attempts; 2 (21–40%) indicates implementation within smaller teams or departments; 3 (41–60%) suggests common and well-known use; 4 (61–80%) represents the spread of the practice throughout the organization; while 5 (81–100%) indicates that a particular practice has become standard and widely applied within the

enterprise. Table 1 shows the eight disciplines that make up the FICO Maturity Model. Each discipline is defined with a brief description that explains its role in measuring, managing, and improving the CX in organizations.

Table 1
FICO model of the user experience maturity.

No.	Discipline	Description
1	Understanding of the users	CX perceptions are collected from various research sources analyzed to determine the impact on loyalty, resulting in reports, persons and customer journey maps.
2	Measurement	The most important metrics for driving loyalty a regularly measured, tracked, and analyzed to enable CX management.
3	Management	Analyzing and evaluating user experience metrics guides improvement projects and user experience design decisions.
4	Culture and the organization	Employees are hired and trained to provide a quality user experience. Their efficiency is monitored, and they are rewarded according to their achievements.
5	Strategy	The desired user experience is clearly defined, aligned with the brand and business strategies, and shared with employees.
6	Design	There is a clearly defined and consistently applied design process used to develop and improve the user experience.
7	Process	Processes that significantly impact the user experience are improved in a prioritized manner, depending on their impact on the user experience.
8	Technology	Technology to improve the user experience is continuously identified, evaluated and implemented, with priority given to what has the greatest impact on the user experience.

Note. Adapted from Batroff (2016).

The third is Forrester's CX maturity model (Temkin & Schatsky, 2011), which consists of six key areas and thirty practices, and the degree of maturity is evaluated according to the following criteria: practice awareness, application, employee competence, documentation, measurement and improvement process. The key areas are customer understanding, prioritization, design, delivery, measurement and culture, each including five best practices (P1–P5):

1. Customer understanding focuses on ensuring that employees have comprehensive knowledge of customers and their expectations. Practices include gathering qualitative feedback, analyzing unstructured and user data, exploring unmet needs, and providing accurate information for decision-making.
2. Prioritization ensures efficient use of resources to improve the experiences of the most important users. It includes assessing the impact of CX on business goals, identifying key user groups, evaluating projects, correcting or discarding negative initiatives, and defining priorities.
3. Design turns the vision of user experience into concrete plans and tasks for employees.
4. Delivery ensures operations deliver experiences on a daily basis consistent with design and goals. Practices include defining departmental activities, training

employees, providing tools, aligning digital and physical assets, and tracking feedback.

5. The measurement quantifies the quality of experience from the user's perspective, including service perception, ease of use, and business impact.
6. The culture emphasizes the importance of employees and management understanding the importance of mature CX. The key is to develop empathy for customers and recognize the importance of the employee's experience as much as the customer's.

The analysis of different models for evaluating the maturity of the user experience shows that there are certain differences, but they are not significant. The FICO model and the Forrester model share similar core disciplines, with the Forrester model actually being a version of the FICO model. The main difference is that the Forrester model, apart from best practices, also includes psychological aspects, i.e. empathy. The Forrester model questionnaires therefore also examine the psychological dimension of business and relationships within CX management.

3. Methodology

To obtain data on the level of satisfaction with the service, time and motivation associated with the conditions for obtaining information in terms of availability, clarity of information, perceived values directly related to the ease of decision-making, and additional values, contained in saving time and comparing products, the paper investigated the most frequently used sources of information, i.e. the optimal selection and the extent to which information literacy affects their preparedness and satisfaction with the user experience in tourism. Studies at the level of individual consumers are needed in order to understand their personal intentions and reasons for using direct sources of information, the key drivers of consumer engagement in the use of digital platforms and internet sources, all in order to obtain a set of attributes and identifiers that argue for the quality of information that would be associated with positive experience and satisfaction (Eckhardt et al., 2019). Authors investigating the influence of online reviews on tourist destination choice, including perceptions of usefulness, quality, and diagnostic value, suggest that detailed online sources of information (reviews, blogs, comments) significantly contribute to tourist readiness and satisfaction. Therefore, according to theorists and their research, tourists who use such sources feel safer, more informed, and make better travel decisions (Eckhardt et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2017). Based on the set goal, the following Research Questions (RQ) was formulated:

- RQ_1: Travelers who are aware of detailed and clearly defined specifics of service information, using online sources (reviews, social networks, specialized platforms), feel more satisfied and prepared for travel than those who rely on traditional sources of information (traditional intermediaries).

Based on previous research and theoretical studies by practitioners, supported by findings on the advantages of digital tools in information provision (responsibility and reliability of digital tools and the Internet), which expand perceptions clearly based on quality information that stimulate their intentions, through satisfaction and their experiences and encourage loyalty, the authors found a positive relationship between satisfaction with the level of information and satisfaction with the quality of service (Wang et al., 2016; Bilan et al., 2024). Supporting the theorists' position, service quality and satisfaction associated with loyalty using direct information are visible through positive perceptions of the online platforms. Internet as a digital tool affects the optimal use of time and collaboration. Supporting the theorists' position, the following Research Questions was formulated:

- RQ_2: A higher level of information and preparedness positively impact on higher level of satisfaction, covering the overall user experience in travel.

The research was conducted from June 1st to September 1st, 2025, using a survey questionnaire. A convenience sample of 200 respondents as statistical units, potential and

absolute travelers, were targeted, with 153 respondents completing the survey fully. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire included 24 questions: 4 socio-demographic (gender, age, education, employment) and 20 on travel habits, information sources, online tool usage, attitudes toward information and stress, satisfaction, and negative experiences. It was distributed via social networks and messaging apps (WhatsApp and Viber), allowing rapid collection from participants with diverse profiles. The results were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of tables and graphs, with the corresponding interpretation.

4. Results

An analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents provided insight into the structure of the sample. The following figures present the distribution of respondents according to gender, age, level of education, and employment status. This ensures a better interpretation of further results, since demographic characteristics can influence attitudes and behaviors related to travel.

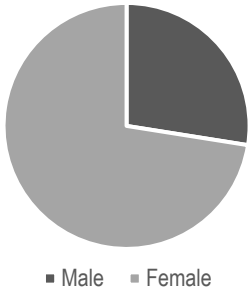

Figure 1
Demographic characteristics of respondents by gender.

Note. Values are based on author's own survey data. Source: Authors.

In terms of age (Figure 2), the largest share of respondents belongs to the 26-35 age group (39.2%), while the share of respondents aged 18-25 is almost the same (38.6%). Respondents aged 36-45 make up 13.7%, while those over 45 are represented in smaller numbers: 5.2% in the 46-55 age group and 3.3% of respondents over 55.

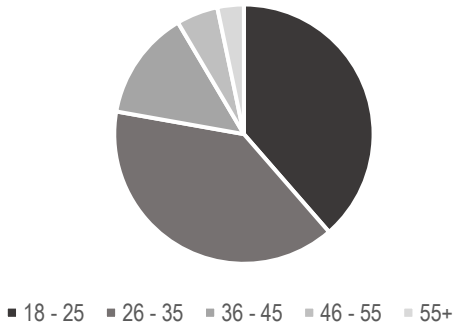

Figure 2
Demographic characteristics of respondents by age.

Note. Source: Authors.

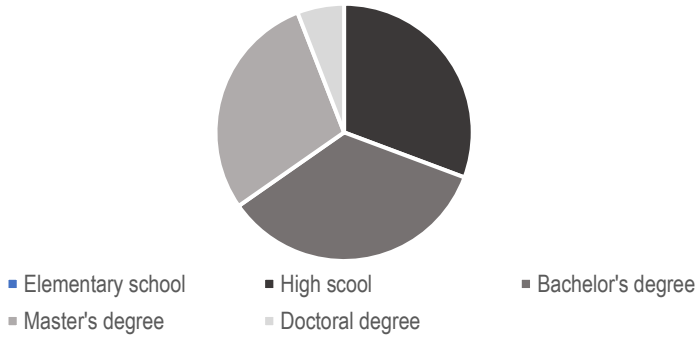

Figure 3
Characteristics of respondents by level of education.

Note. Source: Authors.

Analysis of the level of education in Figure 3 shows that the largest share of respondents has completed undergraduate studies (34.6%), while 30.7% of respondents have completed high school, 28.8% of respondents have completed graduate studies, and 5.9% have a master's or doctorate degree. Among the respondents, no one indicated that they had completed only primary school, which indicates a relatively high educational structure of the sample.

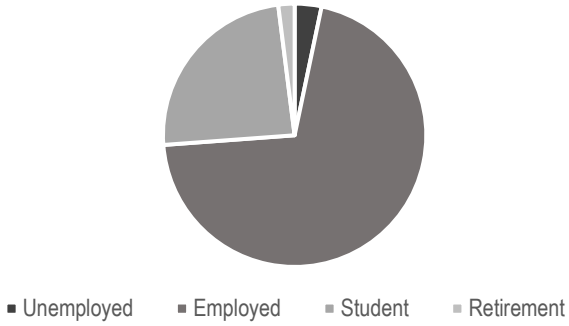

Figure 4
Employment status.

Note. Source: Authors.

The analysis of the employment status (Figure 4) of the respondents shows that the largest share is employed (70.6%), while 24.2% of the respondents are students. A smaller share of the respondents are unemployed (3.3%) and retired (2%). These results indicate that the sample is predominantly composed of the active working population, which may affect travel patterns and preferences when planning a trip.

Considering portions in Figure 5, many respondents travel recreationally 1-2 times a year, while 26.1% travel 3-5 times a year. A smaller proportion of respondents (7.2%) travel more than 5 times a year, while only 1.3% of respondents reported not traveling during the year.

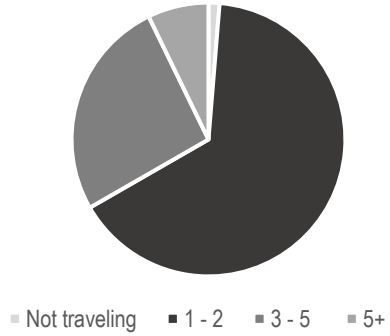

Figure 5
The frequency of travel throughout the year.

Note. Source: Authors.

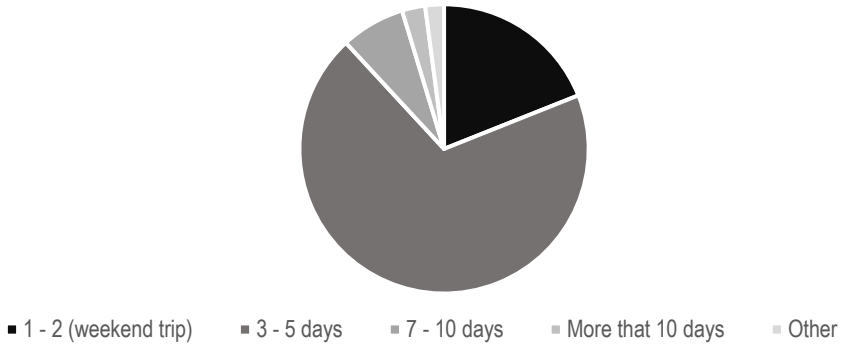

Figure 6
An average trip duration.

Note. Source: Authors.

The analysis of the average duration of the trip (Figure 6) shows that the majority of respondents (69.3%) travel for 3-5 days. Shorter trips, such as weekend trips of 1-2 days, are practiced by 19% of respondents, while 7.2% of respondents travel for 7-10 days, and only 2.6% for more than 10 days. The results indicate that the majority of respondents prefer short to medium-long recreational trips, which can be relevant for shaping the offer of tourist services and planning the information needed for the trip.

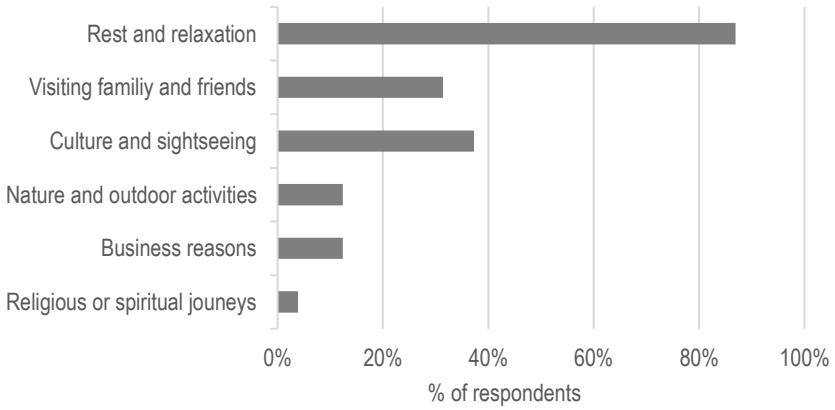

Figure 7
The most common reason for traveling.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering of an analysis of the most common reasons for travel (Figure 7), results speak in favour of "rest and relaxation" as the most dominant motive among respondents, cited by 86.9% of survey participants. This is followed by culture and sightseeing with 37.3% and visiting family and friends with 31.4% of respondents. A smaller share of respondents cites nature and outdoor activities and business reasons (12.4% each), while religious or spiritual travel was the motive for 3.9% of respondents.

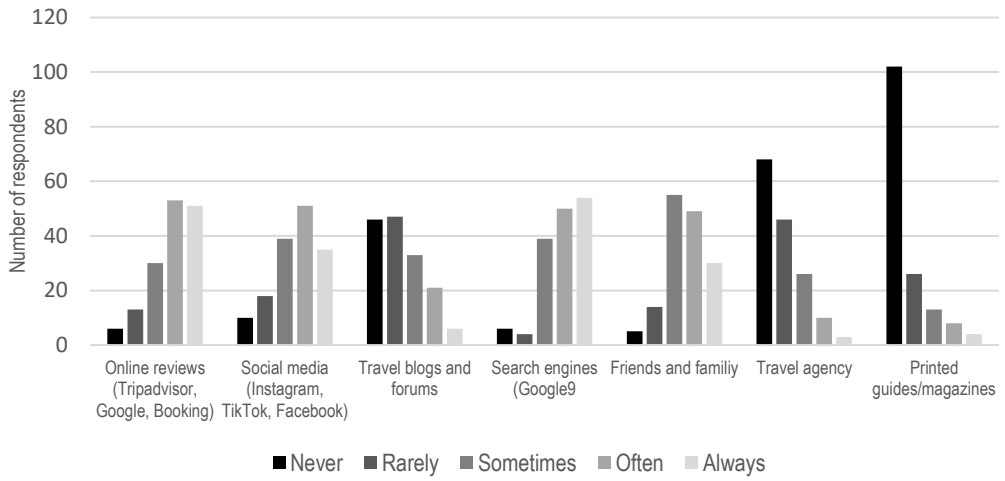

Figure 8

Estimated frequency of using of different sources of information when planning a trip.

Note. Source: Authors.

The results in Figure 8 show that online reviews (TripAdvisor, Google, Booking) are one of the most frequently used sources – as many as 34.6% of respondents stated that they use them often, and 33.3% always, while only 3.9% never use them. Similarly, internet search engines (Google) have an extremely high level of use, as they are always or often used by more than two thirds of respondents (35.3% always, 32.7% often).

Social networks (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) also appear to be an important source of information – 22.9% of respondents stated that they always use them, and 33.3% that they often do. Friends and family continue to play a significant role – 32.03% of them use them often, and 19.6% always rely on recommendations from their immediate environment.

On the other hand, travel blogs and forums have moderate usage – most respondents use them sometimes (21.6%) or rarely (30.7%), while 30.1% never use them. Travel agencies have a low frequency – 44.4% of respondents never use them, and only 3 respondents (1.9%) always use them. The least used source is printed guides and magazines, which 66.7% of respondents never use, while only 2.6% always use them. These findings confirm the dominance of digital sources of information in the travel planning process, while traditional sources, such as printed guides and travel agencies, are significantly marginalized.

The results in Figure 9 show that online reviews are perceived as a relatively trustworthy source. Most respondents rated them as mostly trustworthy, 22.2% as somewhat trustworthy, while 13.7% considered them completely trustworthy. Only a small proportion of respondents expressed distrust: 1.3% rated them as completely unreliable, 5.9% as mostly unreliable.

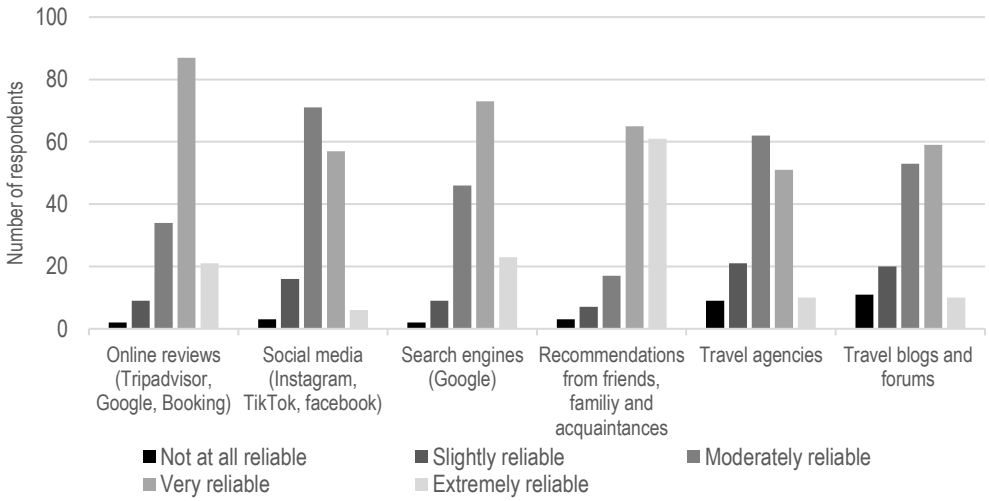

Figure 9
Level of source reliability.

Note. Source: Authors.

Social networks have a significantly lower level of perceived trustworthiness. The largest proportion of respondents (46.4%) rated them as partially trustworthy, while 37.3% considered them mostly trustworthy, and 3.9% as completely trustworthy. Distrust was expressed in smaller proportions: 10.5% mostly unreliable, 1.9% completely unreliable. For search engines (Google), many respondents consider them to be partially reliable (30.1%) or mostly reliable (47.7%), while 15% rate them as completely reliable. Distrust is minimal, with 1.3% not at all reliable and 5.9% mostly unreliable. Recommendations from friends, family and acquaintances appear to be one of the most reliable sources of information. The majority of respondents rate them mostly reliable (42.5%) or completely reliable (39.9%), while 11.1% rate them as partially reliable. Distrust is minimal, with 1.9% not at all reliable, 4.6% mostly unreliable. Travel agencies are rated as a moderately reliable source – the largest share of respondents rate them as partially reliable (40.5%) or mostly reliable (33.3%). Only 6.5% see them as completely reliable, while a significant portion expresses distrust (6% not at all reliable, 13.7%). Similarly, travel blogs and forums were rated mostly as partly reliable (34.6%) or mostly reliable (38.6%). Only 6.5% of respondents considered them completely reliable, while the share of those expressing distrust was higher (7.2% not at all reliable, 13.1% mostly unreliable). The results indicate that recommendations from close people are the most reliable source of information. Online reviews and search engines occupy a middle position, with respondents using them frequently, but with a certain amount of caution.

Most respondents (97.4%) travel independently (Figure 10), while only 2.6% use the services of travel agencies. These data indicate a strong tendency to independently organize travel among the respondents, which may be related to preferences for flexibility, control over planning and independent information gathering through digital sources.

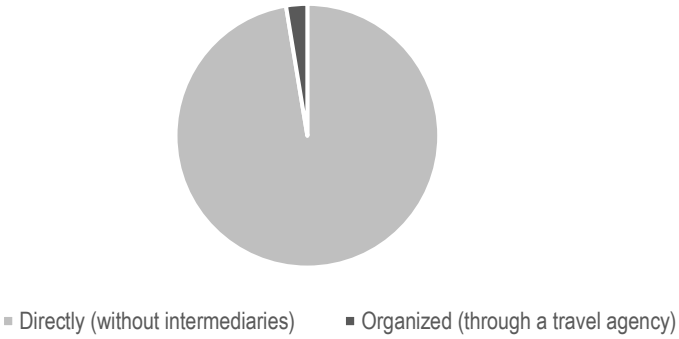

Figure 10
The mode of travel organisation.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the use of online tools for obtaining travel information such as agency websites, online bookings and promotional notifications when booking through a travel agency, Figure 11 shows an analysis of the share of users who confirm appropriate acceptance and the level of engagement related to the frequency of use of online tools, when seeking travel information and booking through a travel agency.

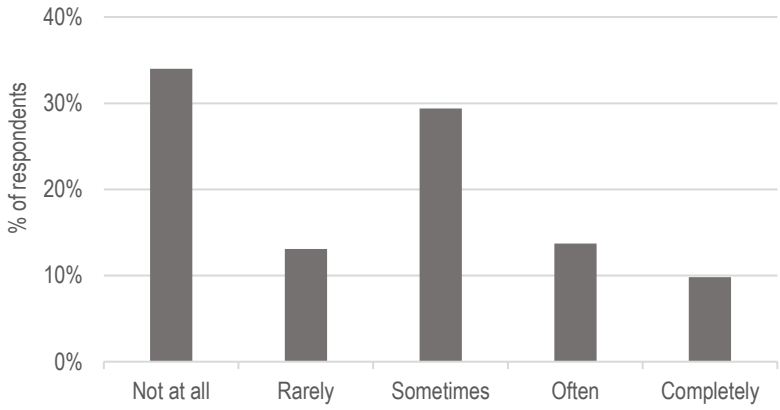

Figure 11
Use of online tools to obtain travel information when booking through a travel agency.

Note. Source: Authors.

The largest share of respondents stated that they do not use online tools at all, while an additional 13.1% stated that they rarely use them. Around 29.4% of respondents use them occasionally, and 13.7% often. Only 9.8% of respondents depend entirely on online tools. These results indicate that, although digital tools play an important role in the tourism industry, their use in travel through agencies among respondents remains limited. The reason for this may be the fact that most respondents do not use agency services at all (97.4% travel independently), and therefore do not use the online tools associated with them.

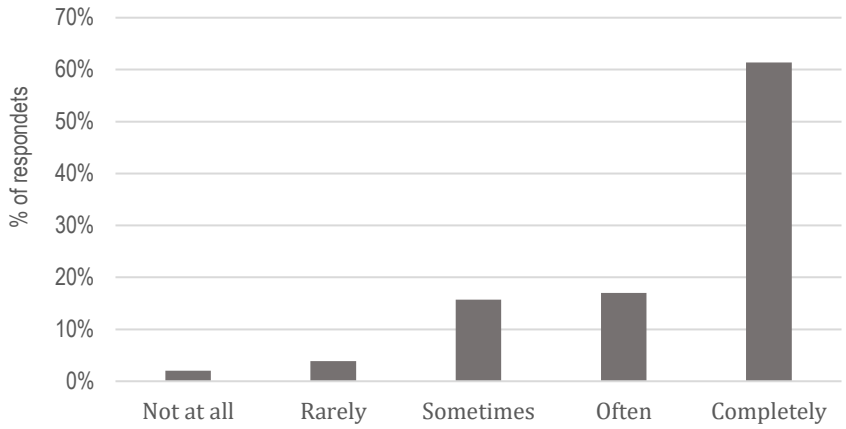

Figure 12
Use of online tools for travel information when traveling independently.

Note. Source: Authors.

When asked to what extent travelers use online tools (Booking.com, TripAdvisor, transportation apps, social media) when traveling independently, results (Figure 12) confirm that that the majority of respondents use digital tools to a large extent – as many as 61.4% stated that they use them completely, while an additional 17% stated that they use them often. Moderate use (sometimes) was indicated by 15.7% of respondents, while the share of those who rarely or never use online tools is very low (5.9% in total). These data confirm that online tools have become an indispensable part of the process of planning and implementing independent travel. This further emphasizes the trend of independent travel organization (97.4% of respondents), with digital platforms enabling greater flexibility, availability of information and faster adjustment of plans. It highlights the complementary contribution of individual travel planning and the use of online tools when making travel decisions.

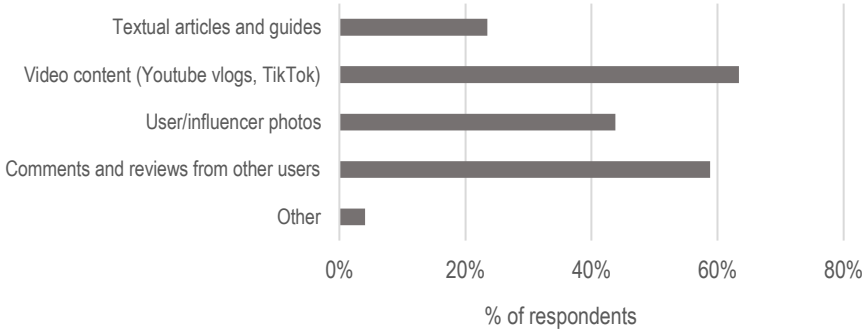

Figure 13
Most useful information formats when choosing a destination/service.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the most useful information formats when choosing a destination/service respondents could choose multiple answers. The results (Figure 13) show that comments and reviews from other users are the most important format of information, with 63% of respondents identifying them as the most relevant. It is followed by video content with 59%, which confirms the importance of visual and dynamic materials in the decision-making process. Photos of users and influencers were singled out by 44% of respondents, while

text articles and guides received significantly less support of 24%. Only 4% of respondents belong to the "other" category.

These results indicate that travelers value most authentic and experiential information formats, such as reviews and visual content, while classic textual materials have less importance in the process of choosing a destination or service. Information quality is most often positively perceived and evaluated through audiovisual experiences, user reviews, and the power of word-of-mouth — all of which are significantly amplified in interactive environments through the strategic use of modern marketing tools and technologies.

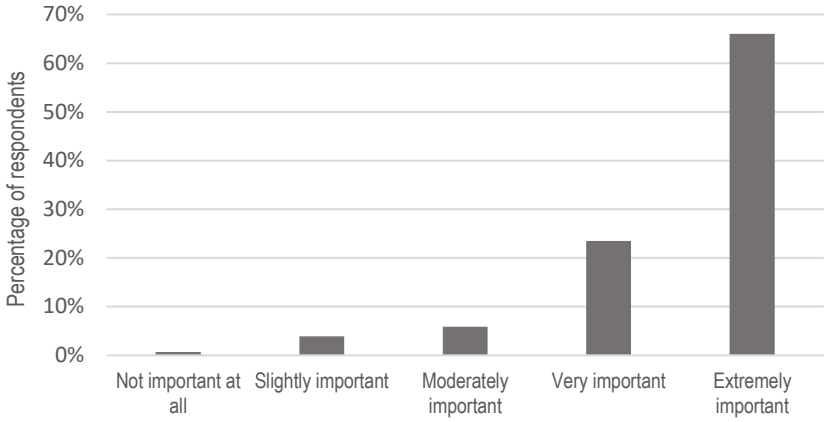

Figure 14
Importance of pre-travel information.

Note. Source: Authors.

The results in Figure 14 highlight an extremely high importance of being informed among travelers: two-third of respondents considered being informed to be very important, while an additional 23.5% answered that it was mostly important. Moderate importance (score 3) was indicated by 5.9%, while only a smaller proportion of respondents considered being informed to be less important (3.9% in total). These data confirm that being informed is one of the key factors in preparing for a trip, which is consistent with the results of previous questions in which respondents emphasized the importance of online reviews, visual content and the experiences of other users. When asked about the importance of being informed before traveling, respondents indicated an exceptionally high importance of being informed among travelers: as many as 66% of respondents considered being informed to be very important, while an additional 23.5% answered that it was mostly important. Results indicate that most respondents perceive themselves to be at least partially prepared for unforeseen situations, with a dominant attitude of high preparedness, which can be linked to their reliance on online information and tools during the travel.

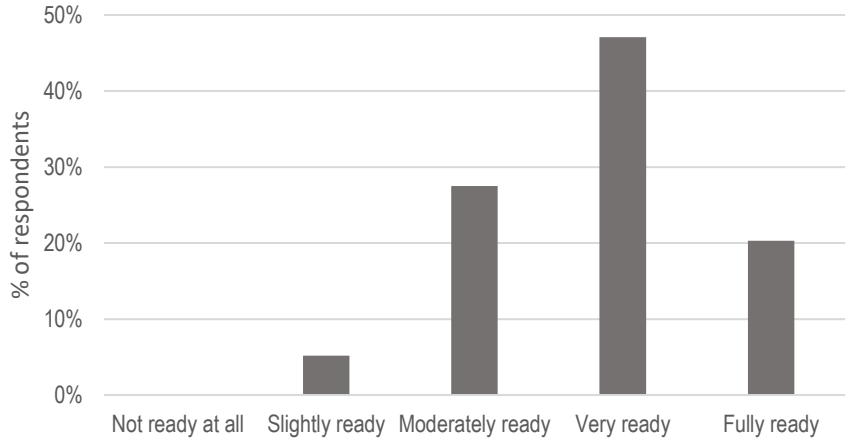

Figure 15
Readiness for unforeseen situation during travel.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the assessment preparedness for unforeseen situations during travel (Figure 15), the results show that no respondents rated their preparedness as not ready at all, while 5.2% stated that they were slightly ready. The largest share of respondents (47.1%) considered themselves very ready, and an additional 20.3% rated themselves fully ready. An intermediate position was chosen by 27.5% of respondents, rating themselves moderately ready.

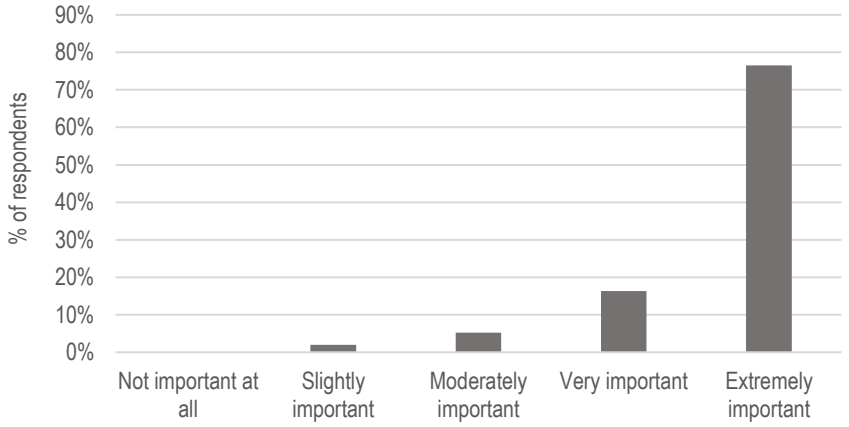

Figure 16
Importance of up-to-date and authentic information.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the importance of information being up-to-date with authentic, respondents answered using Likert scale (Figure 16). The results show that for most respondents, it is extremely important that information is up-to-date and authentic, even ¾ of respondents. An additional 16.3% consider this characteristic to be very important, while smaller shares of respondents took an intermediate position (5.2%) or a less important level (1.9%). No one considered that the timeliness and authenticity of information was not important at all. These data highlight that travelers strongly value the accuracy, timeliness and credibility of information, which can be linked to previous findings on the importance of online reviews, visual content and general pre-travel information.

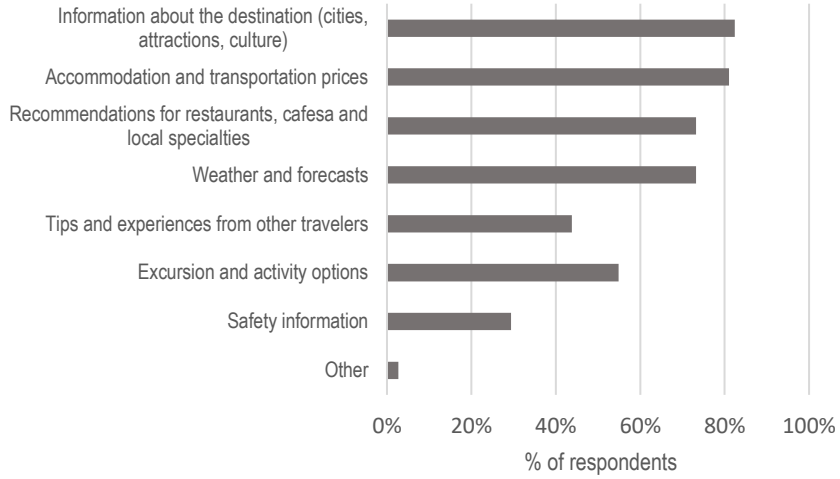

Figure 17
Types of information travelers seek before a trip.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the most frequently searched information before traveling (Figure 17), respondents emphasize the importance of information about the destination itself (82.4%) and about accommodation and transportation prices (81%). Recommendations for restaurants, cafes, and weather forecasts are most frequently consulted (73%), followed by excursions and activities (55%) and advice from other travelers (44%), and while safety information is less consulted (29%).

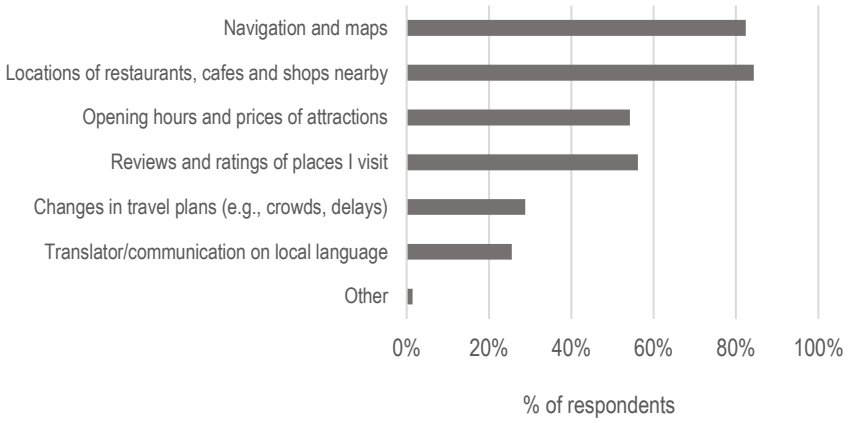

Figure 18
Types of information travelers seek during the trip.

Note. Source: Authors.

Considering the types of information searching while traveling (Figure 18), the biggest share of respondents indicates the importance of online tools to locate nearby restaurants, cafes, and shops (84%) and for navigation/maps (82%). Over half check opening hours and prices (54%) and reviews/ratings (56%). Fewer seek updates on travel changes, like crowds or delays (29%), and 26% use digital tools for translation and communication.

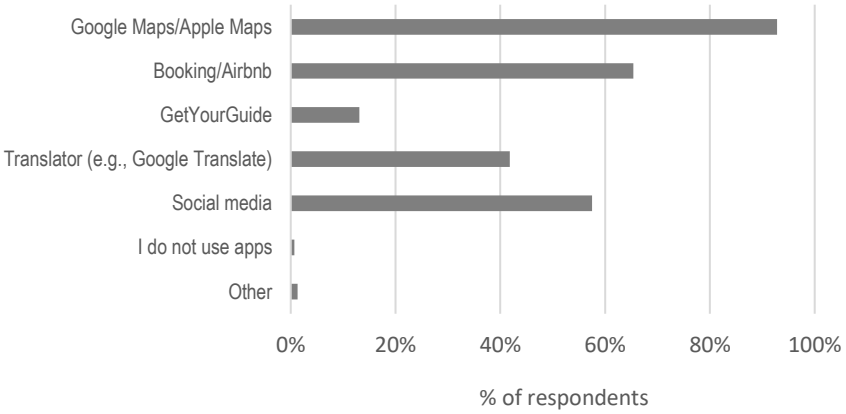

Figure 19
Mobile applications used by travelers during the trip.

Note. Source: Authors.

When asked about mobile app usage while traveling (Figure 19), most respondents confirmed using various digital tools. Navigation apps like Google Maps or Apple Maps are the most common (93%), followed by accommodation platforms Booking and Airbnb (65%) and social networks (58%) for information and sharing experiences. Translation apps are used by 42%, specialized apps like GetYourGuide by 13%, and only 1% do not use any mobile apps.

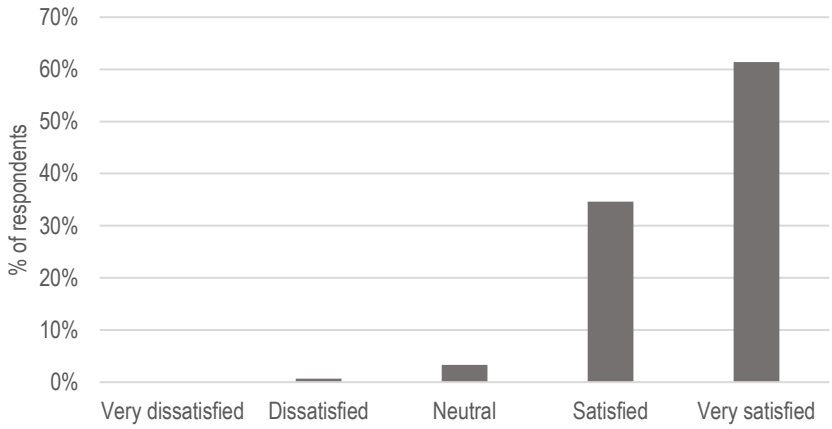

Figure 20
Satisfaction with previous trips.

Note. Source: Authors.

Asked about their level of satisfaction with their previous travels respondents rated their experiences (Figure 20). The majority expressed a high level of satisfaction: 61.4% rated their travels as 5 ("very satisfied"), while 34.6% chose 4 ("satisfied"). Considering previous results related to information sources, communication tools, and supplementary sources of satisfaction and motivation, these findings further confirm that almost 96% of respondents report being satisfied at a “good” or “excellent” level, with nearly two thirds rating their satisfaction as “excellent.”

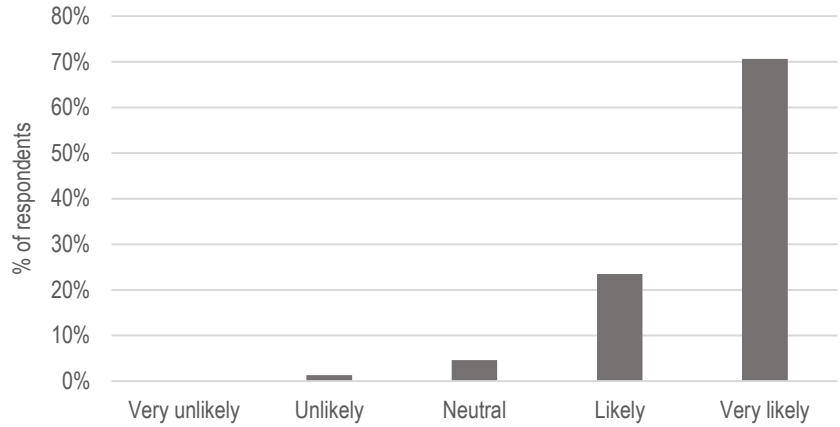

Figure 21

Propensity to recommend the destination and related services to others.

Note. Source: Authors.

Regarding respondents' willingness to recommend destinations or services (Figure 21), results show a high degree of willingness. Most respondents, 70.6%, indicated they are "very likely" to recommend a destination or service, while 23.5% said they are "likely." A small share, 4.6%, remained neutral, and only 1.3% stated they are "unlikely." None reported being "very unlikely." These data confirm that travelers participating in the study generally have positive experiences with destinations and services, which is reflected in a high willingness to recommend them to others.

Considering the negative experiences that affected traveler's satisfaction, most respondents answered negatively, indicating that their previous travels were generally not marked by significant dissatisfaction. A smaller proportion of respondents stated that they had had a negative experience that affected their satisfaction. When asked "Did you have a negative experience that affected your satisfaction?" 21 respondents (13.7%) answered "Yes". Within that share even 2/3 respondents defined their negative experience in more details, which they could briefly describe in the following optional question. The most frequently reported problems related to accommodation not matching the pictures and advertisements, poor hygiene, and outdated or inadequate facilities. Some respondents highlighted unfriendly staff, price manipulation in restaurants, or flight delays and cancellations. Also, several respondents noted inadequate information at the destination, such as traffic changes or important information available only in the local language. Some respondents also mentioned disappointment due to the deviation of the actual appearance of the destination from the images on social networks. Negative experiences emphasize the importance of accurate, up-to-date and credible information, as well as the quality of accommodation and services, which can significantly affect overall satisfaction and the perception of the user experience during the trip. It confirmed that, accessible information supports perceived information quality. Therefore, the gap between perceived values, expected experiences, and actual quality could negatively impact on reputation, loyalty and, in long term, image.

Regarding the usefulness reviews and online information when planning and choosing the optimal choice for their last trip (Figure 22), the result showed that 43.8% of respondents considered reviews and online information to be extremely useful when planning a trip, while 39.9% considered them very useful. Partial usefulness was reported by 11.1% of respondents, while only a small proportion consider them to be slightly useful (3.9%) or not useful at all (1.3%). These results confirm that reviews and online information play a significant role in informed traveler decision-making and the choice of accommodations,

activities and destinations, which further emphasizes the importance of accurate, up-to-date and credible data in digital sources.

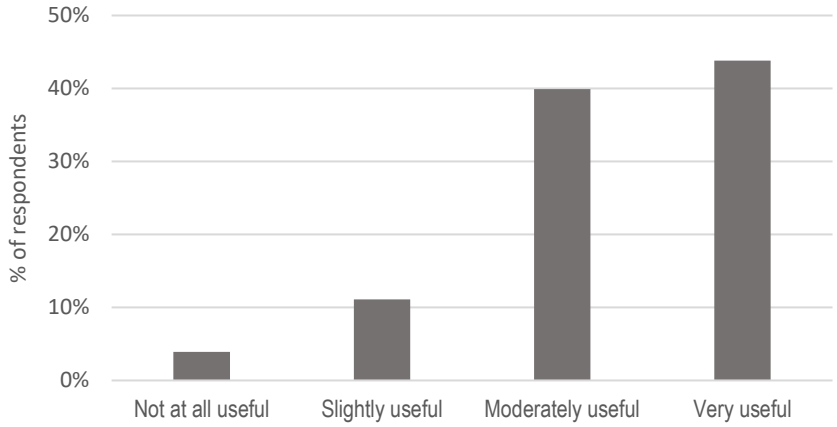

Figure 22
Usefulness of reviews and online information when planning the most recent trip.

Note. Source: Authors.

The results of this survey confirm the findings of the other surveys. Considering the usefulness of reviews and online information when planning their latest trip, almost 84% of respondents rate them as very useful and moderately useful. The results confirm the relevance and compatibility of these results with the average results in the EU-27, and in comparison, with the results of the Eurobarometer 2021 Report (European Union, 2021). According to the results of this survey, the most used source of information when planning a trip, apart from "Recommendations from friends and relatives" (56%), "Personal experiences" (37%), belongs to Reviews of travelers using online platforms (34%).

5. Discussion and future research

The choice of information source is a key indicator of the personality and competence of future tourists in using innovative solutions when planning a trip. Technology and media have reshaped our information consumption, even habits, creating innovations in the way of communication and new digital solutions. As Yan et al. (2017) stated, the quality of information has preferred characteristics based on relevance, understandability, accuracy, conciseness, completeness, timeliness and usefulness.

High-quality information and the delivery of expected value drive disruptive processes that reshape existing frameworks and create new conditions for the creation, sharing, and delivery of products, while also saving time. By enabling the dissemination of high-quality, context-sensitive data, digital tools catalyze disruptive processes that challenge conventional market frameworks and foster new paradigms for product creation, distribution, and time-efficiency. The bridging of perceptual, expectation-based, and utility-driven gaps contributes to both spatial and temporal convergence within the tourism ecosystem. Lifestyle emerges as a critical construct in the analysis of consumer behavior, frequently cited in academic literature as a determinant of decision-making and preference formation. It not only influences tourist behavior but also directly informs travel motivations - including the mode of travel, destination selection, accommodation preferences, and activity choices during the stay. Curtis and Lehner (2019) posit that the pursuit of an elevated standard of living constitutes a fundamental motivational driver for individuals. This aspiration manifests in diverse forms, ranging from economic advancement to personal development, leisure, experiential enrichment, and social recognition. Such motivations orient consumers toward

products and services that resonate with their value systems, interests, and lifestyle orientations. Modern tourists increasingly seek an individualized approach, looking for offers that meet their specific needs and expectations. Their motivation for travel is no longer just an escape from everyday life, but a quest for authentic experiences, self-fulfillment, and social interaction. In this context, understanding changes in lifestyle becomes crucial for recognizing and satisfying user motivations. At the same time, the products and services consumed by tourists can also reflect their inner motives and value systems.

Digital technologies, combined with emotional and social elements, create a unique customer experience in tourism that surpasses traditional service dimensions and serves as a key differentiator. Information fulfills several roles: it shapes expectations before the trip, supports decision-making during the stay, and enables evaluation after the return, enhancing tourists' sense of control and satisfaction. Seeking information as the initial interaction with a service provider or the media is the first step in experiencing and predicting future activities and events, which is highly relevant and important for future research. Given the tourism market's spatial disunity and resulting fragmentation, digital tools add value through the quality and attributes of the information they provide.

Future research should examine how different types of destinations, such as urban, rural, and coastal settings, use digital information to influence traveler decisions, loyalty, and trust. There is also a need to better understand how emotional engagement interacts with information quality to drive sustainable tourism behavior. Comparative analyses across markets and cultures could help explain why travelers interpret and value digital information differently. Long-term studies could explore how ongoing technological change affects tourist satisfaction and destination competitiveness, especially as travelers increasingly rely on online reviews and peer-generated content. Finally, future research should connect the social, technological, and ecological aspects of tourism to build a more integrated understanding of how information, experience, and sustainability converge in modern travel ecosystems.

6. Conclusion

Today's tourists are digital, informed, and actively involved in shaping their own travel experiences. Information is not only a technical resource but also a source of emotional comfort and satisfaction. For destinations and service providers, this means offering accurate, timely, and visually appealing information while encouraging open communication and cocreation. CX is shaped by a network of interactions, emotions, and touchpoints that together form the perception of value. Models such as FICO and Forrester highlight the need for a structured approach, a strong organizational culture, and engaged employees. Findings confirm that digital information sources, such as search engines, online reviews, and social networks, dominate travel decisions, while traditional channels continue to decline. Reviews from other travelers have the strongest impact, and social media content is often viewed with caution, emphasizing the importance of transparency, trust, and reputation management.

Well-informed travelers feel more confident, less stressed, and better prepared for unexpected situations. Positive experiences build loyalty and stimulate word-of-mouth, turning satisfied tourists into destination ambassadors. Managing CX in tourism requires balance, with digital tools enhancing but not replacing human contact. On a wider level, effective CX management supports sustainable tourism by informing visitors about responsible practices, dispersing travel flows, and reducing the negative effects of mass tourism. In short, quality CX management brings together informational, emotional, social, and digital dimensions, and only by integrating these elements can destinations and service providers achieve long-term competitiveness and meaningful connections with travelers.

The article is relevant to UN Sustainable Development Goals:

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